

Stafford, pastor of a Kansas City, Mo., Seventh-day Adventist church, was recognized for baptizing 900 people in Zimbabwe during the summer of 1983.

This year's speakers included Roy Hartbauer, member of the department of communicative disorders at Andrews University, talking about ministry to the handicapped; Harold Cleveland, past president of the Allegheny West Conference and current director, for the regional conferences, of the Thousand Days of Reaping program, surveying the "Thousand Days of Reaping"; and Robert Olson, secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, discussing Ellen White's view of the sanctuary. Caleb Rosado, pastor of the All Nations Church in Berrien Springs, Mich., elicited the strongest response when he challenged black church leaders to help Hispanics and Asians, now suffering from the lack of visibility and representation within the Adventist church structure that used to plague black Adventists.

The 1983 meetings were coordinated by a planning committee which consists of E. E. Cleveland; Benjamin Reaves, chairperson of the religion department at Oakwood College; and Eric Ward, pastor of the Oakwood College Church. The annual Professional Growth In Ministry Meetings grew out of a one-day session on professional growth held at Oakwood in 1977 for black workers from the South Atlantic and South Central conferences. The meetings are now sponsored by all nine of the regional conferences, and the regional departments of the Pacific and North Pacific unions. For the first two years, workers from the regional conferences met without official General Conference sanction, violating an unwritten but generally observed church policy against unapproved inter-conference sessions. Although such meetings would usually be organized by the unions concerned, the regional conference presidents decided to go

ahead and organize on their own. The first two years, the General Conference sent unofficial representatives to observe only. By the third year of meetings, the General Conference had voted the Professional Growth In Ministry Meetings onto the official church calendar, finally recognizing them, according to E. E. Cleveland, as a "positive rather than negative force in black Adventist life."

E. E. Cleveland emphasizes the benefits of the meetings, and stresses the importance of both the "politics of information" and the "politics of growth" within the black community. Black Adventists are making a conscious effort to bring myriad new members into the church. Eventually, the size of the regional conferences may make black unions not only economically feasible, but politically necessary.

---

Penelope Kellogg Winkler teaches writing at Columbia Union College and is editorial associate of *Spectrum*.

## Winds of Reform: Structural Transition in North America

by Bonnie Dwyer

By 1985, when the General Conference session is held in New Orleans, the denomination's structure will have received many critiques from study groups established by the church at various levels. The General Conference has already instituted a committee, chaired by a general vice president, to look at the structure of the world church, and current plans indicate that not only committees and commissions, but constituency meetings of conferences will study the topic as well. The Pacific Union has appointed a committee to consider how to

change church structure. In Mid-America a document has been prepared for the union officers which lists options for reorganization, and five conferences in the North Pacific Union have established committees to study church structure. Church publications and public meetings, like the national conference of the Association of Adventist Forums, are also exploring comparisons between the church and both corporate structural models and government structural models.

Francis W. Wernick chairs the General Conference committee on structure that began its deliberations January. The 21-member committee is looking at the need for unions, conferences, and divisions within the world church. The chairperson will give a report on the committee's findings at Annual Council in anticipation of action at the 1985 General Conference.

### *Pacific Union*

---

In the Pacific Union, where the most extensive study has been compiled, subcommittees report in March on the "operational feasibility" of the recommendations given to the union officers last year (*Spectrum*, Vol. 14, No. 1). The 39-member committee created to study the recommendations divided itself into three subcommittees: Group 1 is looking at the local church and church ministry functions; Group 2 is considering the local conference and education and publishing systems; and Group 3 is examining the union level and finance and administrative functions.

Final recommendations from the large committee are expected by September or October 1984, according to Chairperson David J. Bieber. Adopting the commission's report will probably take several years, but Bieber expects to see a conceptual change in the way the church operates. Instead of ideas disseminating from administration to the churches for implementation, ideas will

work their way up from the local church. As a result of the suggestions being made by structural studies, the department structure at both the local and union conferences will be much leaner.

### *Mid-America Union*

---

One of the most detailed proposals for change has emerged from the Mid-America Union. At the request of the union officers, a document was prepared by Dean Hubbard, president of Union College. His study listed publishing, trust services, and education as the areas with the most inefficiency. Hubbard said that the supervision of publishing and education could best be handled at the union level. Trust services could be placed at the union level, or, preferably in a union-wide foundation. Most other functions could be performed more efficiently at the conference level.

Hubbard then outlined three plans, listing in descending order the extent of reorganization each plan would require and the savings that would result. In the first, most extensive plan of reorganization, the union would be set up similar to a corporation with a president and a number of vice presidents overseeing various functions. "Supervision of the publishing and educational work would be done at the union level with no conference functions in these areas. A union-wide foundation would take over the present association and trust services activities. In this first proposal, only the Central States Conference would be discontinued, with a vice president for black affairs appointed at the union level. All other functions, including evangelism, would reside at the local conference level with a vice president for departmental activities exercising general supervision at the union level." In the first plan, Hubbard estimated Mid-America could save approximately \$2 million each year by eliminating

38½ to 40½ budgets annually (budgets include salary, secretarial support, travel, etc., for personnel).

Hubbard's second, more "moderate reorganization" proposal would maintain the present union structure, but limit supervision of educational work to the union level, with no conference positions in this area. "Publishing work would continue as both union and conference functions, but supervision would be reduced. The Central States Conference would be continued. A union-wide foundation would assume association and trust service activities. All other functions, including evangelism, would reside at the conference level with a director of departmental affairs exercising general supervision at the union level." This second, more moderate, plan would eliminate 26 to 28 budgets, and approximately \$1.4 million annually.

In Hubbard's third, most modest, reorganization plan, the present union and conference structures, including departments (except for education, and the association and trust services) would be maintained. Union departments would be reduced by attrition. Responsibility in these areas would move gradually to the local conference level, until a departmental structure similar to that in the previously described plans is achieved. Relying on attrition, this third reorganizational plan could eventually save the union approximately \$1 million to \$1.25 million annually. Hubbard's document is being discussed by Mid-America, but no action has been taken.

### *North Pacific Union*

**I**n the North Pacific Union, five committees are studying church structure. In addition

to the union committee, which was established after the Davenport discipline session by an expanded union executive committee, the Upper Columbia, Oregon, Washington, and Montana conferences have all established structure committees.

Morris Brusett chairs the 15-member union committee which has seven lay members in addition to Brusett. The committee organized in September, met again in November, and plans four meetings in 1984. Three subcommittees are functioning: a structural analysis committee, a business management committee, and a constitution and bylaws committee. The full committee must have its recommendations ready for the special union constituency meeting September 6. Therefore, Brusett wants to have the committee vote on final recommendations before finally taking them to the constituency.

The local conference committees in the North Pacific Union plan to give their recommendations to the union committee. Glen Aufdehar, president of the Washington Conference, said the Washington committee was created during the conference's May constituency meeting. Chaired by Art Ward, a layperson, the committee is examining staffing, overhead, and duplicated services. One member is thus able to pass along the thoughts and ideas of the conference committee.

---

Bonnie Dwyer is a graduate student in journalism at California State University at Fullerton, and is news editor of *Spectrum*.